

# A Comprehensive Guide to Herbs and Breastfeeding

Useful Herbs, Herbs to Avoid, and Helpful Hints from Mama

Earth Mama Angel Baby®

Earth Mama Angel Baby® is the only complete line of safe, zero toxin, hospital recommended, honestly organic and natural herbal products, and USDA Certified 100% Organic teas, specifically formulated to support women throughout the common discomforts of childbirth, from pregnancy through labor, postpartum recovery, breastfeeding, baby care and even the loss of a baby. Every Earth Mama Angel Baby product is made with only pure, plant based, natural, worry-free ingredients. And of course all Earth Mama Angel Baby products are rated 0 for toxins on the respected Skin Deep database. Safe for Pregnancy, Ideal for the Whole Family.

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### Introduction

Melinda Olson started blending organic herbal products for friends in her Oregon kitchen many years ago. Knowing that herbal remedies can be safe and effective for pregnancy's many common discomforts, she is an expert in the use of plant based remedies for pregnant women and babies, and continually balances her trust and care of traditional herbal wisdom with evidence-based research.

Years of organic gardening, a passion for herbs and a desire to find safe, natural remedies for mamas and babies led to founding Earth Mama Angel Baby, a trusted leader in safe care for pregnant women and their babies. Earth Mama Angel Baby supports mamas and babies through the entire miraculous birth process, offering nature's perfect solutions to perfectly natural pregnancy discomforts.

Melinda is Earth Mama's founding mama, and just one of the many mamas whose collected strength, wisdom and skills embody Earth Mama Angel Baby. Mama's Promise® is to offer only safe, pure, natural products that work. If it doesn't measure up to Mama's standards, it doesn't leave the building. *Promise*.



The Original Earth Mama Garden







~ ONE ~

## Helpful Herbs for Healthy Breast Milk Production

Breastfeeding is the natural way to nurture a new baby, but sometimes the Milk of Momness needs Mother Nature's help to flow freely. Galactagogues ('galact' or 'galacto' is the Greek prefix that means milk, and the suffix 'agogos' means flow) are nature's herbal gifts to lactating women, and have been used for centuries to help increase milk supply. Herbal galatagogues can help stingy milk flow from healthy mama to healthy baby.

**Anise seed** (*Pimpinella anisum*) is a culinary spice and a digestive herb that helps dispel gas and relieve indigestion and nausea as well as increase milk flow. According to the German Commission E, it is used in combination with Fennel seed and Caraway seed for dyspeptic conditions and gastrointestinal discomfort.

**Blessed Thistle** (*Cnicus benedictus*) is a bitter tasting tonic herb that is often used in galactagogue teas and tinctures. The bitters stimulate the secretion of saliva and gastric juices. There is also much historical evidence that it helps increase breast milk. *Blessed Thistle is a uterine stimulant and should not be consumed during pregnancy.* 

**Chaste Tree** (*Vitex*) has historically been used to treat everything from hangovers to flatulence and fevers to low breast milk production. It has also been studied for reducing the symptoms of PMS and menopause.



**Chaste Tree** (Vitex)



**Goat's Rue** (*Galega officinalis*) has been recommended by the German commission E for its use as a galactagogue. Its galactagogue properties were first noted to effectively increase milk in goats. It is used by nursing mothers, as well as by farmers to increase milk production in their livestock. It grows so aggressively that it is now classified as a noxious weed. Goat's Rue should not be confused with Rue (Ruta graveolens), which is used in primitive cultures as a powerful uterine stimulant and abortifacient.

**Fennel seed** (Foeniculum vulgare) is shown to increase milk production in goats and has long been used as a galactagogue by breastfeeding women. This licorice-tasting herb is also used as a digestive aid that can help to soothe a colicky breastfed baby and ease postpartum discomfort. It is contraindicated (do not use) during pregnancy.



Fennel Seed (Foeniculum vulgare)

**Fenugreek seed** (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*) is one of the herbs most often used to help increase breast milk supply. Its sweet/spicy flavor is popularly used in a variety of culinary dishes, including Indian curry. It is used to help soothe digestion and is well documented to effectively decrease cholesterol and blood sugar as well as increasing breast milk supply. It is generally recognized as safe, *although because of its ability to stimulate the uterus, it is not* 



**Nettle** (Urtica dioica)

for use during pregnancy. Large amounts of Fenugreek can cause maple syrup like odor in the sweat, milk and urine and it should be avoided by people with asthma or an allergy to chickpeas.

**Milk Thistle** (*Silybum marianum*) is a liver protecting seed that has even been used to successfully treat mushroom poisoning. This marvelous little seed has recently been shown to interfere with the promotion and progression of prostate, breast and endocervical tumor cells. A very recent study documented that women using milk thistle had significant increase in breast milk over the population using a placebo.





Red Raspberry leaf (Rubus idaeus)

#### Ten Helpful Herbs

Anise seed (Pimpinella anisum)

Blessed Thistle (Cnicus benedictus)

**Chaste Tree** (Vitex)

Goat's Rue (Galega officinalis)

Fennel seed (Foeniculum vulgare)

Fenugreek seed

(Trigonella foenum-graecum)

Milk Thistle (Silybum marianum)

Nettle leaf (Urtica dioica)

Oats (Avena sativa)

Red Raspberry leaf (Rubus idaeus)

**Nettle leaf** (*Urtica dioica*) is a deliciously nutritive leafy green vegetable that contains easily digestible iron, calcium, vitamin K, and folic acid, and is a wonderful pregnancy tonic. Since breastfeeding can cause a woman to lose approximately half the iron that she does during a regular menstrual cycle, iron-rich foods are important. Traditional wisdom supports Nettle's safe use during lactation to increase breast milk as well as for providing nutritive support for the nursing mother.

**Oats** (Avena sativa) are often used for their emollient properties to help soothe dry, itching skin. They are also a very nutritive herb, high in calcium, protein, and fiber. Oats has been used for a wide variety of conditions, including reducing cholesterol and reducing anxiety or restlessness. Oats are considered good support for general weakness and are often helpful in restoring vigor and strength during convalescence, making oats and oatmeal a good supportive herb to nourish lactating women.

**Red Raspberry leaf** (*Rubus idaeus*), though not a traditional galactagogue, is a richly nutritive uterine tonic herb, high in minerals that are helpful for good milk production and useful to strengthen postpartum and breastfeeding women.

Our bodies are amazing at doing what they do, like making babies and breast milk. And of course they can do their job much more easily if they are healthy, well rested, and well fed. Herbs, like the other plants we eat, serve to support and nourish a mama's body as it makes nourishment for her baby. Herbs truly are gifts from the earth.





~ T W O ~

# Ten Non-Herbal Tips to Help Increase Breast Milk Production

- Supply and demand is one of the biggest factors to help support the production of breast milk. There is a stimulus/response system between the breast and the brain. When the baby suckles, the brain releases prolactin to trigger breasts to manufacture more milk. The more baby is allowed to suck, the more the breast is stimulated to produce milk. So the more you ring the dinner bell, the more generous the buffet!
- **Breast milk comes in two courses.** The initial offering is carbohydrate rich foremilk. Consider the foremilk the appetizer and salad. Next on the menu is the fat rich hindmilk. Hindmilk is important for growing babies who need those extra nutrients. If baby is switched from one breast to the other too soon before the first breast is drained, they essentially leave the table before the main course is served. A good rule of thumb is to finish the first breast first and start on the opposite side for the next feeding. Nurse, drain, rinse, repeat.
- Nothing says "snuggle" and cements bonding like skin-to-skin contact between mama and her nursling. Sometimes lazy, sleepy sippers do a better job of getting down to business when they are held skin to skin.
- You know how a flight attendant tells you to put on your own oxygen mask first? You can't be much help to your child if you're lying on the deck panting for air. The same thing is true when you're nurturing a baby. Stress can affect a woman's ability to produce breast milk, and with new mothers, rest and sleep can be very rare commodities. So when your well-meaning friends offer to bring over a casserole accept it with gratitude! In fact, when your family says "let me know if there's anything I can do," invite them to toss in a load of laundry or do some grocery shopping. They really do want to help!



- Even if you don't sleep, rest when you have a chance. Your body has an amazing ability to recharge itself. Here's some ancient wisdom for you: Rest when the baby rests, clean when the baby cleans. Making milk really is something of a superpower. But even Wonder Woman needs a nap sometimes!
- In spite of what you hear, babies can't be spoiled. Unlike peaches, they are perfect in the moment beings whose very survival depends on their ability to communicate their needs (see #9, below). Babies cry when they need to eat. When they are born, their stomachs are about the size of one shooter marble, and it takes as little as 7 ml. of milk



- to fill them up. Nursing when baby cries, nuzzles and roots keeps the supply and demand system in perfect balance without having a stuffed, regurgitating baby.
- 7. Babies have an innate need to suck, but mamas can get exhausted by active non-nutritive suckers, and bottles and pacifiers can cause nipple confusion. For this reason, wait until nursing is well established before you offer baby a pacifier. Huh? Pacifier you say? Mama time is comfort, sucking and feeding time. And important research shows that the use of pacifiers can *significantly* reduce the risk of SIDS. According to First Candle, experts recommend giving your baby a pacifier EVERY time he or she is placed down to sleep after about a month of successful breastfeeding.
- Eat well, mama. Breastfeeding requires about 200-600 calories a day. This is not the time to try to diet back to your pre-pregnancy weight. Quite the opposite. What you eat is nourishing two people. So make every calorie count with a well balanced diet of good whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables and plenty of protein. Your body will use the calories wisely. It's recovering from important work and needs the nutrition. And so does your baby.



- Lucky you! It's now your job to keep track of someone else's poop. But don't confuse what goes out with what goes in. At around 3-4 weeks, bowel movements will decrease. Exclusively breastfed babies may have only one bowel movement every day or two, sometimes even longer. Breast milk is used very efficiently by the body and there are, as a rule, fewer "leftovers," so bowel movements are less frequent than those of formula fed babies. Nursing well and urinating frequently are signs of a well-nourished baby.
- 10. It takes a conscious effort to be calm when your baby is frustrated and crying. But remember that babies communicate by crying. That's all it is communication. Relaxing through the anxiety of a crying baby can help you feel calmer, which leads to easier breastfeeding. Try some breathing techniques, count to ten, do one minute of meditation, run in place or do whatever you need to do to feel collected. Then pick up the baby and calmly make sure you have a good latch. You'll be amazed at how quickly your calm reassurance is communicated to that squalling mass of squirming pink flesh. You're doing a great job, mama!







~THREE~

# Nine Things

#### Your Nipples Wish You Knew About Them

- When breastfeeding, don't wash your nipples with soap! They have special ducts that secrete naturally lubricating, bacteria fighting oil. "What," you say, "don't wash?" No, of course hygiene is important, especially since bacteria and fungus thrive in dark, moist places like behind a breast pad. But rinsing and air drying with your regular daily bath/shower should be plenty to keep your nipples in the pink.
- Breastfeeding is good for your baby AND your body! Research shows that it may even help reduce chances of breast cancer. Women with a family history of breast cancer have a 59% lower risk of developing breast cancer if they breastfed their babies. What a fantastic deal: healthier babies and healthier mamas. It's a two-fer!
- Gentle please! Don't try to "toughen them up." Step away from the age-old advice to have at your nipples with a rough cloth or worse, a scrub brush. That's no way to treat the girls! Think of your nipples as you would the soft palms of your hands

beginning a new job with a shovel. It takes a little bit of time to get them use to the work. It's good to keep nipples soft with a soothing, non-toxic balm, but no scrubbing. Treat them gently and they'll get road ready soon enough.

No toxins please! If you think about it, what's going on your nipples is going straight into your angel's mouth. Use a nipple cream that is as pure as anything else you would put on or in your baby. Allergic to wool? Then you should know that lanolin is the sebum or grease from sheep's wool. It is sticky, icky, and may contain

Snip a few cabbage leaves for your nipples, and snack on some coleslaw with the leftovers!

allergens and or even trace amounts of pesticides. Try using a gentle plant-based balm instead. But read the ingredients and know your herbs! One nipple cream was



recently taken off the market for containing neurotoxins. And we don't recommend nipple creams with comfrey, which has been shown to be a liver toxin. But organic calendula is the best herbal option to care for sore, cracked nipples. Read the ingredients, and remember that whatever goes on your nipples is going into your baby!

- Nipples come in all shapes and sizes just like babies do. If they are inverted or flat, you can still breastfeed! And the more you do, the more they will "pop out." If you're having difficulties, seek help from your friendly lactation consultant or specialist.
- Give the girls some air! Massage a few drops of expressed breast milk into sore, cracked nipples. Then let this natural healer air-dry. Breast milk is a natural healer that is always on hand.
- 7. **A little support here, please!** A supportive, comfortable bra was never more appreciated than when breasts are heaving with the milk of momness. Or, if nipples are really sensitive, go without one as much as possible. Now is the time for ultimate comfort!
- Cabbage leaves really can help with sore, engorged breasts. True! Nobody really knows why, but evidence and a lot of motherly wisdom shows that cabbage leaves directly on your nipples and breasts demonstrate the wonder of nature at work again. Snip a few cabbage leaves for your nipples, and snack on some coleslaw with the leftovers!
- Proper latching will help keep nipples pain-free and make breastfeeding a breeze. There are lots of resources to get help. You needed help the first time you rode a bicycle someone there to help you get your balance. There are experts ready, willing and able to help, so find a trusted resource, a nurse, lactation consultant, mom or friend. Breastfeeding comes naturally, but sometimes a new mama and her nipples need a little support. Get it!





~FOUR~

# Herbs to Avoid During Breastfeeding

Like the foods we eat and the medicines we take, some of the constituents in herbs are excreted in breast milk and are, therefore, ingested by a nursing baby. Some of the herbs on this list are included because they contain constituents that may be harmful to the mother or baby. Other herbs should be avoided because they are traditional antilactagogues used during weaning and can reduce breast milk production.

**Alder Buckthorn berry and bark** (*Rhamnus Frangula*); closely related to cascara sagrada – *purative*, laxative intestinal irritant, anthroquinones glycosides excreted in breast milk

Alkanet (Alkanna tinctoria); hepatotoxic phyrrolizidine alkaloilds secreted in breast milk

Aloe (Aloe barbadensis); purgative/cathartic, anthroquinones glycosides excreted in breast milk

**Basil** (Ocimum basilicum); possible mutogenic effect of the essential oil

**Bearberry** (Arctostaphylos Uva ursi), potential hepatotoxic hydroquinones secreted in breast milk

**Black Cohosh** (*Cimifugia racemosa*); digestive tract irritant, may cause digestive irritation for the baby

**Bladderwrack** (Fucus vesiculosus); high levels of iodine and possible heavy metal contamination

**Borage** (Borago officinalis); hepatotoxic pyrrolozidine alkaloids excreted in breast milk



**Borage** (Borago officinalis)



**Butterbur** (*Petasites hybridus*); hepatotoxic pyrrolozidine alkaloids excreted in breast milk

**Cascara Sagrada bark** (Rhamnus purshiana); purative, laxative intestinal irritant, anthroquinones excreted in breast milk

**Chaparral** (*Larrea tridentate*), potential toxicity to the infant

**Cinchona bark** (*Cinchona spp.*); potential toxicity to the infant

**Coltsfoot leaf** (*Tussilago farfara*); hepatoxic pyrrolizidine alkoloids excreted in breast milk

**Comfrey leaf and root** (Symphytum officinale); hepatoxic pyrrolizidine alkaloids excreted in breast milk

**Dong Quai** (Angelica sinensis), contains estrogenic compounds

**Elecampane** (*Imula helenium*), potential toxicity to the infant

**Ephedra/Ma Huang** (Ephedra sinica); stimulants excreted in breast milk

**Goldenseal** (Hydrastis canadensis), may increase infant bilirubin levels

**Guarana seeds** (Paullinia cupana); stimulants secreted in breast milk

**Joe-Pye weed** (Eupatorium purpureum); hepatotoxic pyrrolizidine alkaloids secreted in breast milk

**Kava Kava** (*Piper methysticum*); possible passage of pyrones into breast milk, central nervous system depressant

#### Herbs to Avoid

Alder Buckthorn (Rhamnus Frangula)

Alkanet (Alkanna tinctoria)

**Aloe** (Aloe barbadensis)

Basil (Ocimum basilicum)

Bearberry (Arctostaphylos Uva ursi)

Black cohosh (Cimifugia racemosa)

Bladderwrack (Fucus vesiculosus)

Borage (Borago officinalis)

**Bugelweed** (Lycopus europaeus)

**Butterbur** (Petasites hybridus)

Cascara sagrada (Rhamnus purshiana)

**Chaparral** (Larrea tridentate)

**Cinchona bark** (Cinchona spp.)

**Coltsfoot leaf** (Tussilago farfara)

**Comfrey** (Symphytum officinale)

**Dong Quai** (Angelica sinensis)

**Elecampane** (Imula helenium)

**Ephedra/Ma Huang** (Ephedra sinica)

**Goldenseal** (Hydrastis canadensis)

**Guarana** (Paullinia cupana)

**Jasmin flowers** (Jasminum pubescens)

**Joe-Pye weed** (Eupatorium purpureum)

Kava Kava (Piper methysticum)

**Indian snakeroot** (Rauwolfia serpentine)

**Licorice** (Glycyrrhiza glabra)

Madder (Rubia tinctorum)

**Male Fern** (*Dryopteris filix-mas*)

**Mate** (*llex paraguayensis*)

Parsley leaf (Petroselinum crispum)

**Peppermint leaves** (Mentha piperita)

**Prickly Ash** (Zanthoxylum americanum)

Pulsatilla plant (Anemone pulsatilla)

Rhubarb (Rheum palmatum)

Sage (Salvia officinalis)

Senna (Cassia spp.)

Jenna (Cassia Spp.)

**Spearmint leaves** (Mentha spicata)

**Tobacco** (Nicotine tabacum)

**Wintergreen** (Gaultheria procumbens)

**Wormwood** (Artemis absinthium)



**Licorice root** (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*); potential toxicity to the infant

**Madder root** (Rubia tinctorum); potential toxicity to the infant

**Male Fern** (*Dryopteris filix-mas*); potential toxicity to the infant

Mate leaves (Ilex paraguayensis), stimulants excreted in breast milk

**Prickly Ash bark** (*Zanthoxylum americanum*), digestive tract irritant, may cause digestive irritation for the baby

**Pulsatilla plant** (Anemone pulsatilla), digestive tract irritant, may cause digestive irritation for the baby

**Rhubarb** (*Rheum palmatum*); potential toxicity to the infant, may cause digestive irritation for the baby



**Comfrey** (Symphytum officinale)

**Senna leaf** (Cassia spp.); genotoxic anthraquinones excreted in breast milk

**Tobacco** (Nicotine tabacum); diminished milk production, excreted in breast milk

Wintergreen leaves (Gaultheria procumbens); potential toxicity to the infant

Wormwood (Artemis absinthium); potential neurotoxins excreted in breast milk

#### Herbs that Decrease Breast Milk: Avoid During Breastfeeding

Herbs that can reduce breast milk are called antilactagogues. Several of these are members of the mint family of plants and are recommended to be avoided in larger than culinary amounts during breastfeeding. Many women even experience a reduction of breast milk when they eat peppermint candies or menthol cough drops.



#### **Bugelweed leaves** (Lycopus europaeus/Lycopus virginicus)

**Jasmin flowers** (Jasminum pubescens)



**Sage** (Salvia officinalis)

Parsley leaf (Petroselinum crispum)
This is a case where "culinary
amounts" really means a sprig or
a sprinkle. The Eastern dish tabouli
has a large amount of parsley and
many women find that it reduces
their breast milk supply.

Peppermint leaves (Mentha piperita): Not recommended in larger than culinary amounts, including of peppermint candies or breath mints.

**Spearmint leaves** (Mentha spicata)

**Sage** (Salvia officinalis): a powerful abortifacient that also reduces breast milk production. This herb contains thujone and is not recommended for nursing women or for women who are epileptic or prone to seizure, or during pregnancy

#### A Note on Mints:

Many herbaceous plants are members of the mint family, including catmint, basil, rosemary, thyme, peppermint and spearmint.

They are generally perennials and have concentrated amounts of essential oils. The essential oils of these herbs should not be taken internally during pregnancy or lactation.

They may harm kidney and/ or liver function and, in large concentrations, stimulate uterine contractions.

The herbs themselves should only be taken internally in culinary amounts during both pregnancy and lactation.

Of course this isn't a complete list of plants to be avoided during breastfeeding. Some plants are generally toxic and should not be ingested at all. But you're not likely to ingest random unknown plants, or chomp on the highly toxic Castor Bean in your every day herb excursions. This list includes common herbs that you might see in herbal preparations, supplements or foods.

As always, for your safety and your child's safety, if you are pregnant or breastfeeding check with your healthcare provider before taking herbs, prescription or over-the-counter medications.





~FIVE~

## Now, How About a Nice Cup of Herbal Tea?

If you can't find reputable organic herbs, or don't know your tincture from your tisane, a blended galactagogue tea is probably your best bet. Earth Mama Angel Baby's USDA Certified 100% *Organic Milkmaid Tea* blends the best-quality, safest, time- and evidence-based research-

tested herbs for healthy breast milk production, with attention to flavor and effectiveness.

Please note, *Organic Milkmaid Tea* is NOT for pregnancy, because many herbs, like fennel and fenugreek, are uterine stimulants, but after your wee one is here you can safely use it. Sipping a soothing cup of tea is a great way to relax and take care of yourself, and encourages your incredible body to do what it naturally knows how to do. Enjoy *Organic Milkmaid Tea* in a simple, delicious chai brew.



#### Milkmaid French Vanilla Chai

Milkmaid Tea is formulated to support healthy milk production with fennel, fenugreek, anise seed and caraway seed with nettle and red raspberry leaf. *Delicious hot, or iced.* 

Milkmaid Tea is NOT for use during pregnancy.

#### 1 bag Earth Mama Angel Baby Organic Milkmaid Tea

- French Vanilla soy creamer
- Ground organic cinnamon
- Ground organic ginger

#### **Directions:**

Brew one cup of Milkmaid Tea extra strong, steeping for 12 minutes. Add French vanilla soy creamer to taste (approximately 1-2 Tablespoons per cup). Garnish with a few sprinkles of ground cinnamon and ginger to taste. Mix, sip, and enjoy!





Everyone wants the best for their baby, from breast milk's disease fighting antibodies to its reputation for lowering risk of ear infection, asthma and childhood obesity, and nothing matches the bonding and precious together time that breastfeeding provides. Needing a little help? Turn to Mother Nature to help support your mamalicious mammaries. It's a natural!



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